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# Readings Booklet

English 33 English 33 English 33

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## June 1993



# English 33

## Part B: Reading

### Grade 12 Diploma Examination

**Alberta**  
EDUCATION

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**June 1993**

**English 33 Part B: Reading**

**Readings Booklet**

**Grade 12 Diploma Examination**

***Description***

**Part B: Reading** contributes 50% of the total English 33 Diploma Examination mark.

There are 8 reading selections in the Readings Booklet and 70 questions in the Questions Booklet.

Total time allotted: 2 hours

***Instructions***

- Be sure that you have an English 33 Readings Booklet **and** an English 33 Questions Booklet.
- You may **not** use a dictionary, thesaurus, or other reference materials.



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**I. Questions 1 to 5 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.**

**INCIDENT OBSERVED WHILE PICKING UP THE MAIL**

The elements have had their way  
with this man as with any other  
natural object. The rain has left its mark  
on him as on the stone.

- 5 He looks down into the face  
of a boy about eight years old,  
a face so open to the world it reminds me  
of a cat whose claws have been clipped  
—it is that vulnerable.
- 10 They wear bib overalls and rubber boots  
standing at a counter  
in this small-town post office  
and out of the corner of my eye I watch  
the boy sign the man's name
- 15 to an unemployment insurance cheque.  
He writes very slowly and with great care.  
I am tempted to follow them  
across the street and into the bank  
so that I can see them smile
- 20 at one another, lovingly,  
as the cashier examines  
the signature and finds it good.  
Father and son—it would be impossible  
to decide which of them is prouder.

*Alden Nowlan*  
Canadian poet and writer  
(1933–83)

**II. Questions 6 to 14 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a play.**

**from ALL MY SONS**

*It is 1947, two years since the end of the Second World War and three years since the KELLER'S son LARRY was reported missing in action. MRS. KATE KELLER believes her son is still alive but her older son, CHRIS, and her husband JOE believe that there is no hope. CHRIS has now brought the issue to a head by inviting LARRY'S old girlfriend, ANNIE, back for a visit, hoping that she will have forgotten LARRY and will turn her attention to him.*

**CHRIS** (*To MRS. KELLER*): Isn't Annie finished eating?

**MRS. KELLER** (*Looking around preoccupiedly at the yard*): She'll be right out.

(*Moves.*) That wind did some job on this place. (*Of the tree.*) So much for that, thank God.

5   **MR. KELLER** (*Indicating the chair beside him*): Sit down, take it easy.

**MRS. KELLER** (*She presses her hand to the top of her head*): I've got such a funny pain on the top of my head.

**CHRIS**: Can I get you an aspirin?

10   **MRS. KELLER** (*Picks a few petals off the ground, stands there smelling them in her hand, then sprinkles them over the plants*): No more roses. It's so funny . . . everything decides to happen at the same time. This month is his birthday; his tree blows down, Annie comes. Everything that happened seems to be coming back. I was just down the cellar, and what do I stumble over? His baseball glove. I haven't seen it in a century.

15   **CHRIS**: Don't you think Annie looks well?

**MRS. KELLER**: Fine. There's no question about it. She's a beauty . . . I still don't know what brought her here. Not that I'm not glad to see her, but . . .

20   **CHRIS**: I just thought we'd all like to see each other again. (*MRS. KELLER just looks at him, nodding ever so slightly—almost as though admitting something.*) And I wanted to see her myself.

**MRS. KELLER** (*Her nods halt. To MR. KELLER*): The only thing is I think her nose got longer. But I'll always love that girl. She's one that didn't jump into bed with somebody else as soon as it happened with her fella.

25   **MR. KELLER** (*As though that were impossible for ANNIE*): Oh, what're you . . . ?

**MRS. KELLER**: Never mind. Most of them didn't wait till the telegrams were opened. I'm just glad she came, so you can see I'm not completely out of my mind. (*Sits, and rapidly breaks stringbeans in the pot.*)

**CHRIS**: Just because she isn't married doesn't mean she's been mourning Larry.

30   **MRS. KELLER** (*With an undercurrent of observation*): Why then isn't she?

**CHRIS** (*A little flustered*): Well . . . it could've been any number of things.

*Continued*

- MRS. KELLER** (*Directly at him*): Like what, for instance?
- CHRIS** (*Embarrassed, but standing his ground*): I don't know. Whatever it is. Can I get you an aspirin? (*MRS. KELLER puts her hand to her head*)
- 35 **MRS. KELLER** (*She gets up and goes aimlessly toward the trees on rising*): It's not like a headache.
- MR. KELLER**: You don't sleep, that's why. She's wearing out more bedroom slippers than shoes.
- 40 **MRS. KELLER**: I had a terrible night. (*She stops moving*.) I never had a night like that.
- CHRIS** (*Looks at MRS. KELLER*): What was it, Mom? Did you dream?
- MRS. KELLER**: More, more than a dream.
- CHRIS** (*Hesitantly*): About Larry?
- 45 **MRS. KELLER**: I was fast asleep, and . . . (*Raising her arm over the audience*.) Remember the way he used to fly low past the house when he was in training? When we used to see his face in the cockpit going by? That's the way I saw him. Only high up. Way, way up, where the clouds are. He was so real I could reach out and touch him. And suddenly he started to fall. And crying, crying to me . . . Mom, Mom! I could hear him like he was in the room. Mom! . . . it was his voice! If I could touch him I knew I could stop him, if I could only . . . (*Breaks off, allowing her outstretched hand to fall*.) I woke up and it was so funny . . . The wind . . . it was like the roaring of his engine. I came out here . . . I must've still been half asleep. I could hear that roaring like he was going by. The tree snapped right in front of me . . . and I like . . . came awake. (*She is looking at the tree. She suddenly realizes something, turns with a reprimanding finger shaking slightly at MR. KELLER*.) See? We should never have planted that tree. I said so in the first place; it was too soon to plant a tree for him.
- 55 **CHRIS** (*Alarmed*): Too soon!
- 60 **MRS. KELLER** (*Angering*): We rushed into it. Everybody was in such a hurry to bury him. I said not to plant it yet. (*To MR. KELLER*.) I told you to . . .!
- CHRIS**: Mother, Mother! (*She looks into his face*.) The wind blew it down. What significance has that got? What are you talking about? Mother, please . . . Don't go through it all again, will you? It's no good, it doesn't accomplish anything. I've been thinking, y'know?—maybe we ought to put our minds to forgetting him?
- 65 **MRS. KELLER**: That's the third time you've said that this week.
- CHRIS**: Because it's not right; we never took up our lives again. We're like at a railroad station waiting for a train that never comes in.
- 70 **MRS. KELLER** (*Presses the top of her head*): Get me an aspirin, heh?
- CHRIS**: Sure, and let's break out of this, heh, Mom? I thought the four of us might go out to dinner a couple of nights, maybe go dancing out at the shore.

*Continued*

- MRS. KELLER: Fine. (*To MR. KELLER.*) We can do it tonight.  
 75 MR. KELLER: Swell with me!
- CHRIS: Sure, let's have some fun. (*To MRS. KELLER.*) You'll start with this aspirin. (*He goes up and into the house with new spirit. Her smile vanishes.*)
- MRS. KELLER (*With an accusing undertone*): Why did he invite her here?  
 MR. KELLER: Why does that bother you?
- 80 MRS. KELLER: She's been in New York three and a half years, why all of a sudden . . . ?  
 MR. KELLER: Well, maybe . . . maybe he just wanted to see her . . .  
 MRS. KELLER: Nobody comes seven hundred miles "just to see."  
 MR. KELLER: What do you mean? He lived next door to the girl all his life,  
 85 why shouldn't he want to see her again? (*MRS. KELLER looks at him critically.*) Don't look at me like that, he didn't tell me any more than he told you.
- MRS. KELLER (*A warning and a question*): He's not going to marry her.  
 MR. KELLER: How do you know he's even thinking of it?
- 90 MRS. KELLER: It's got that about it.  
 MR. KELLER (*Sharply watching her reaction*): Well? So what?  
 MRS. KELLER (*Alarmed*): What's going on here, Joe?  
 MR. KELLER: Now listen, kid . . .  
 MRS. KELLER (*Avoiding contact with him*): She's not his girl, Joe; she knows  
 95 she's not.
- MR. KELLER: You can't read her mind.  
 MRS. KELLER: Then why is she still single? New York is full of men, why isn't she married? (*Pause.*) Probably a hundred people told her she's foolish, but she's waited.
- 100 MR. KELLER: How do you know why she waited?  
 MRS. KELLER: She knows what I know, that's why. She's faithful as a rock. In my worst moments, I think of her waiting, and I know again that I'm right.
- MR. KELLER: Look, it's a nice day. What are we arguing for?  
 MRS. KELLER (*Warningly*): Nobody in this house dast take her faith away,  
 105 Joe. Strangers might. But not his father, not his brother.
- MR. KELLER (*Exasperated*): What do you want me to do? What do you want?  
 MRS. KELLER: I want you to act like he's coming back. Both of you. Don't think I haven't noticed you since Chris invited her. I won't stand for any nonsense.
- 110 MR. KELLER: But, Kate . . .  
 MRS. KELLER: Because if he's not coming back, then I'll kill myself! Laugh. Laugh at me. (*She points to the tree.*) But why did that happen the very night she came back? Laugh, but there are meanings in such things. She goes to sleep in his room and his memorial breaks in pieces. Look at it; look. (*She sits on the bench at his left.*) Joe . . .

*Continued*

**MR. KELLER:** Calm yourself.

**MRS. KELLER:** Believe with me, Joe. I can't stand all alone.

**MR. KELLER:** Calm yourself.

120      **MRS. KELLER:** Only last week a man turned up in Detroit, missing longer than  
Larry. You read it yourself.

**MR. KELLER:** All right, all right, calm yourself.

**MRS. KELLER:** You above all have got to believe, you . . .

**MR. KELLER (Rises):** Why me above all?

**MRS. KELLER:** . . . Just don't stop believing . . .

*Arthur Miller*  
Contemporary American playwright

### III. Questions 15 to 26 in your Questions Booklet are based on this article.

#### THE RIGHT BUTTON

- You've just unwrapped that shiny new programmable CD player and sleek video camcorder, fresh from beneath the pine boughs. There's only one problem: you've sorted out all the cables, pushed all the buttons, read through the instruction manuals twice, and you still can't figure out how the gadgets work. Don't 10 question your IQ: households across the nation are in the same quandary. And design experts increasingly believe that the fault lies not with the humble consumer, but in the products themselves. Says David Kelley, a product designer in Palo Alto, California: "The gap between the people designing technology and those who buy it just keeps getting 20 bigger and bigger."
- The classic symptom in most American living rooms is the relentlessly flashing "12:00 AM" on the front of the VCR, evidence that nobody in the house can figure out how to set the clock. Indeed, according to industry surveys, nearly 80 percent of Americans have never programmed their VCRs, an 30 operation that can take up to 10 steps with a button-packed front panel.
- But the syndrome of unworkable technology is far broader: from televisions to jet fighters and nuclear power plants. In the brave new world of electronics, gadgets are growing "smarter," packed with sophisticated computer chips. This transformation has created products 40 ranging from the ingenious—such as answering machines that can automatically forward telephone

calls—to the useless, like powerful pocket computers with keys so tiny they don't fit human fingers. But in the process of getting smarter, products have grown inexorably more complex, and more difficult to operate.

50 It's not all bad. Gadgets are getting more complex because technological advances enable them to do more interesting tasks. A dial telephone or a pocket watch was simple to use, but each did only one thing. If all you want to do is order a pizza or tell the time, they're still fine. If you want to be able to forward your calls to your cellular mobile fax machine, you pay a price in added complexity.

60 Ironically, designers expected that as machines gained computing power they would become easier to use. In 1982, for example, personal-computer industry experts from IBM and Apple promised to make the desktop machines as easy to use as the telephone. Precisely the opposite occurred. By adding features, engineers made the telephone more difficult to use. Says Kelley: "I think it's stupid that you can't go into somebody's office and figure out how to use the telephone." These days the standard office phone can have as many as a dozen push buttons in addition to the regular keys—and the common 70 office refrain is, "I'll try to transfer you, but I'm not sure it's going to work."

80 Donald Norman, a professor of psychology at the University of

*Continued*

- California, San Diego, is the current guru<sup>1</sup> of workable technology. His book, *The Design of Everyday Things*, is a succinct synthesis of ideas about making gadgets usable.
- 90 Norman spent three years studying everything from telephones to jet-fighter cockpits to the control panels at the Three Mile Island nuclear plant.<sup>2</sup> With a few exceptions, what he found appalled him. In the last case—the TMI debacle—he suggests that better-designed, easier-to-read controls and gauges might have averted disaster. “The blame was placed on plant operators who misdiagnosed the problem. But was it human error? To me, it sounds like equipment failure, coupled with bad design.”
- “We need a major change in the way designers and manufacturers think,” Norman says. “In the office alone, bad equipment design takes a huge cost in training and morale.”
- 110 One example: an American computer firm asked Norman to evaluate a new keyboard it planned to market. He noticed that two keys were too close together, and while striking one would save your work, hitting the other would erase it. He pointed out the flaw to the designers, who replied that secretaries in the company had been using the new keyboard for six months and never complained. Norman then interviewed the secretaries, who admitted that they were always losing work by hitting the wrong key. When he asked why they hadn’t complained, the answer was uniform: they assumed it was their own error, not the fault of the keyboard’s design.
- 120
- 130 Even well-designed products can prove bafflingly difficult to use. Often the manuals are to blame. Japanese companies no longer—as they did in the 1950s—send their products to America accompanied by indecipherable instructions in hilarious pidgin English. Instead, they include indecipherable instructions in stilted technical English—just like American companies. The problem is the clash of cultures between engineers and consumers. The first digital watch, in the ’70s, made by Texas Instruments—primarily a technical company—had a manual that used 3,000 words simply to describe how to set the time.
- 140
- 150
- 160
- 170
- One solution to the gadget crisis may be what is dubbed invisible technology—making computers, for example, that hide under the desk, with nothing but a simple screen atop the table. Instead of using an intimidating keyboard, users might write directly on the screen with a special pen. Says Stephen Beck, chief scientist at Lapis Technologies, a California computer firm: “What I keep in mind, for perspective, is that the only piece of technology that the general public has really mastered after the automobile is the telephone.” “I think about my mother when I design a product,” says Kelley, the computer designer. “How would she react?”
- Improvements are underway. Some new appliances now come with a videocassette tape in addition to a printed instruction book. The latest twist in television is a special remote control for VCRs, called VCR Plus,

*Continued*

<sup>1</sup>guru—acknowledged leader

<sup>2</sup>Three Mile Island nuclear plant—located near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: the location of a serious nuclear accident in 1979

- made by Gemstar Development in Monterey Park, California. It's a \$60 remote control for those who can't program their VCRs. Newspapers in New York, Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles now print in their TV listings special three- to eight-digit codes that are punched into the little device, then sent to the VCR. If you want to tape "The Simpsons" this week, you look up the code in the newspaper, press a few buttons, and the VCR programs itself. The numerical code specifies, for example, that the VCR tape the program that runs from 8 to 8:30 on Thursday on Channel 5. Still, this is not exactly Nirvana<sup>3</sup> for technological illiterates: the remote control must itself be initially programmed to operate with a specific model of VCR.
- Another solution to the gadget crisis involves educating young designers and engineers. Norman does so by consulting; Kelley teaches a design class at Stanford University.
- Both preach a similar gospel: simplifying control panels, creating devices that needn't be relearned each time one uses them and designing "intuitive" controls. Norman's example of the intuitive notion: the power seat switch in Mercedes-Benz automobiles, which is in the shape of a tiny seat. Push up on the front and the front of your seat goes up. "Mercedes are obviously not everyday things for most people," says Norman, "but the same principle
- can be applied to much more common objects."
- The next generation of computer chips, already becoming available, may also help. They will equal the room-filling mainframes of two decades ago, powerful enough to chart a course around the moon, or balance the budget of a developing nation. These chips could also be used to make the most user-friendly ever computers, appliances and cars. Beck imagines a VCR that could be programmed by voice—as many as six different voices for family members. "A vocabulary of 50 simple words, like 'Tuesday' and 'Sunday,' is enough," he says. "You say, 'Get me 'Nova,' 9 p.m. Tuesday, Channel 9, one hour,' and it does."
- Sounds simple, right? Just assign each family member a two-digit Voice Recognition Code (VRC) and enter his or her initials at the on-screen prompt, while holding down the "enter" button, making sure the "manual/auto" switch is in "programming" mode. That's the danger: that these formidable chips may only tempt designers to add more elaborate features, leading to more pages in the instruction manual, more bafflement after one opens the box. And this may be a process that never changes: in the 16th century, one English writer criticized the newest plow design, saying it was too complex for the average farmer to manage.

*Michael Rogers*  
Contemporary American writer

<sup>3</sup>Nirvana—bliss

- IV.** Questions 27 to 33 in your Questions Booklet are based on this letter in which Robin shares her concerns about technology with a friend, Kelly, who is in the hospital. Read this first draft of Robin's letter and carefully note her revisions.

18 Lakeview Drive  
Nalwen, Alberta  
T6B 4A7

May 8, 1993

Dear Kelly,

**Paragraph 1**

Well, ~~you're~~ stay in the hospital should soon be over, shouldn't it? A <sup>really</sup> good thing, too, because the grad plans are starting to shape up ~~good~~ <sup>well</sup> and we need your input <sup>meantime,</sup> ~~that you're~~ <sup>too.</sup> In the ~~mean time~~, knowing ~~your~~ <sup>I</sup> into technology, I thought you'd be interested in this article that my uncle gave me after I told him about how frustrated I was <sup>it</sup> ~~me~~ when ~~I took~~ <sup>I</sup> over a week to learn to program our new VCR. I thought it was all my fault when I couldn't get the thing to work, but the article made me realize that I <sup>"to question my I.Q."</sup> didn't have ~~enough knowledge~~. That helped the old ego!

**Paragraph 2**

I But even though ~~you~~ may feel better, it kind of makes ~~you~~ think when ~~you~~ read the words "unworkable technology" in the same sentence as "jet fighters and nuclear power plants". <sup>D</sup> <sup>wonder</sup> ~~and~~ don't you ~~wounder~~ if many people who have been blamed for accidents were really the ~~victums~~ <sup>victims</sup> of "bad design"? After reading the article, I toured the house and looked at the controls on everything. The stove's no big deal (it's <sup>M</sup> ~~ancient~~ <sup>doesn't</sup> ~~ancient~~ anyway), but I can see why ~~mom~~ <sup>I</sup> ~~doesn't~~ want anyone running her washing machine—it has ~~get~~ as many controls as a jet plane. Of course, the microwave is no problem now—but there was a time. . . !

*Continued*

Paragraph  
3

Can you imagine 3000 words to describe how a person would go about setting the time on a digital watch? I like the phrase "clash of cultures between engineers and consumers", after all, the consumer wants to use the gadget and not to know how the gadget was put together! But I can see how instructional videos that go with the instruction book could be great? Just learn by viewing!

Paragraph  
4

What do you think of the idea of the computers under the desk top that you'd use a special pen for. Can your technological loving brain figure out the advantage for writing on a screen, with a pen instead of typing on a keyboard? I think programming the VCR by voice would be just the thing, provided that the programming could be done without creating confusion. If you're going to have to go through essentially the same steps as you go through now, and all you're doing is programming then why bother to change what we already have?

Paragraph  
5

certain. When we One thing is for sure, when me and you graduate and get jobs, we should be aware of any technological glitches in the equipment that we may use. We wouldn't want to be like them secretaries when they thought they were to blame because they lost work from their computers when the real problem was the placement of the keys. After all, our success on the job may result from knowing just which is the "right button" to push. But now I have got to push off to volleyball practise. I have programmed the VCR and set the answering machine, as everyone's gone out and Dad's expecting an important call!

Your friend,

Robin

V. Questions 34 to 42 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a novel.

**from FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN**

*The setting is India after the Second World War. Nanda Kaul has isolated herself from the expectations of society in a quiet town in the Himalayan mountains. Her great-granddaughter, Raka, is recovering from a near-fatal attack of typhoid and has been sent to stay with Nanda Kaul until Raka's ailing mother sends for her.*

Nanda Kaul went on, raising her voice above the drumming of the rain on the roof and the booming and echoing of thunder in the hills that followed the rain like hunting horns.

“The house I had in the plains was crowded, too crowded—my parents’ things, 5 my husband’s things, his family’s. There were Persian carpets his father had bought in Iran when he was the Ambassador there. There was glass his mother had bought in Venice. There were the Moghul miniatures my husband collected.” She covered her eyes, as though dazzled, and bent her head.

10 The thunder galloped across the roof, chasing the fleecy clouds and the lightening rain.

“It was too much, you know, Raka. I am not a collector myself. I had to break free of it. So I came to Carignano without any of it.”

“Left it behind?”

15 “No, no, I gave up the house—it went to the next Vice-Chancellor. No, I distributed it all—to your grandmother, her sister and brothers. I haven’t even seen any of it for years,” she wound up quickly, seeing Raka twist restlessly on her stool, her interest lost in this talk of belongings rather than happenings. Opening out her hands as though willingly releasing the child, she got up brusquely and went to the window. “There, it’s slowing down,” she said, and 20 Raka jumped up and joined her.

“Look at the hydrangeas, beaten down by the rain,” said Nanda Kaul, her voice natural once more, and rounded with relief and pleasure. “Look how the rain brings out their colour. They’re blue again.”

25 In a little while they went out onto the veranda and saw the last raindrops slanting down in the sudden, washed sunlight.

The storm was over. The clouds disappeared: one wisp after another was folded up and whisked away into the blue, and a lovely evening emerged, lucid and peerless, the hills fresh and moist and wooded, blue and green like coils of paint out of a tube. Away in the north the rock-scarred snow range glittered. To the 30 south many hundreds of miles of the plain were visible, streaked with streams and pitted with bright pools of rain.

Going down into the garden, Nanda Kaul said, in a voice that was incredibly

*Continued*

altered, that was hoarse with a true remembrance, "How funny, Raka, I just remembered how your mother, when she visited me here as a little girl, used to sing 'Rainy days are lily days! Rainy days are lily days!' "

35        "Lily days?" said Raka, puzzled. "What did she mean?"

      "You'll see," Nanda Kaul said, and her face twisted oddly at the thought of the blue letter folded up inside her desk. "Go now, go for your walk," she said, harshly.

40        Next morning Raka saw what her mother, as a child, had meant as soon as she woke up and looked out of the window. At first she mistook them for sheets of pink crêpe paper that someone had crumpled and carelessly flung down the hillside, perhaps after another astonishing party at the club. A moment later she remembered her great-grandmother's words and saw that they were hosts of wild pink zephyranthes that had come up in the night after the first fall of rain.

45        At breakfast they met over a big milk-jug that Ram Lal<sup>1</sup> had filled with these lilies and set on the table. They were still slick with rain and brought in with them a sharp odour of moist earth. Vividly pink, their heads stood stiffly on the crimson stalks crammed into the milk-jug's neck. Saffron pollen sprinkled the 50 white tablecloth. A child might have drawn them with pink and yellow wax crayons.

      Nibbling toast, Raka asked "Did my mother often come here when she was little?"

55        "No," answered Nanda Kaul, slowly. "Not often. Your grandmother took her mostly to Simla or Mussoorie—livelier places, you see."

      "Didn't she like it here?"

      "Your mother? I think she did," Nanda Kaul said carefully, not liking to admit that she could scarcely tell one grandchild from the other: the incident of the lilies after rain was the sole one she could remember in connection with 60 Raka's mother. She tried to recall if Tara<sup>1</sup> had gone out to collect lilies, like Ram Lal. She could not. She could only remember the child dashing out of the house after the rain, crying with delight.

      "A letter came," Raka said suddenly, cracking a piece of toast in two. "Was it from her?"

65        "No," said the old lady, her face growing narrower, greyer. "It was from your grandmother."

      "Did she say anything about Mama?" Raka asked, cautiously casual.

      "She's ill again," Nanda Kaul had to reply, briefly, as she pushed away her cup of coffee. "She's in a nursing home again, in Geneva."

70        In the silence that followed, Nanda Kaul bitterly cursed her failure to comfort children, her total inability to place herself in another's position and act accordingly. Fantasy and fairy tales had their place in life, she knew it so well. Why then did she tell the child the truth? Who wanted truth? Who could stand it?

*Continued*

<sup>1</sup>Ram Lal and Tara—household servants

Nobody. Not even herself. So how could Raka?

75     But Raka did not say anything more. Her face was pale, but composed. She might have been indifferent, although deliberately so. After all, she had known her mother ill for most of her life, mysteriously ill, mostly in bed, under a loose pink blanket that smelled of damp, like the lilies. It was no new shock. Her voice had something flat about it, Nanda Kaul noted, when she got up, saying "I think  
80 I'll go out now, Nani."

The old lady nodded, partly in relief and partly in disappointment.

*Anita Desai*  
Contemporary Indian writer

**VI. Questions 43 to 51 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.**

### THE PASSING OF THISTLE

This is our first summer without a dog.  
Fifteen years of disgraces in the night  
(tattered screen doors, overturned garbage pails,  
unexpected puddles on the guest-room bed,  
5 and other such misdeeds) have ended at last.  
She had a way of posing in the landscape,  
arranging herself against a screen of trees,  
upon a lawn or on an outdoor deck,  
so as to bring out the hero in photographers  
10 who could focus on the challenge of her darkness.  
When on the move she carried less distinction:  
a Scottie, long in the barrel, short of leg,  
she trotted country roads as though she owned them,  
so long as a glance behind her could confirm  
15 the support of the authority that gave her hers.  
Absent such authority, she panicked:  
could be found, after a search, hysterically  
galloping somewhere in the wrong direction  
if we returned from shopping or the movies  
20 through a region she had not known long enough to own.  
On her home turf she brooked no trespassing,  
at least by motorcycles, dogs, or horses,  
though she'd roll over basely for human intruders.  
The children who had grown up while she watched  
25 were patient with her as old age declined  
from sleepiness to blindness, deafness, and  
incontinence. Before her last collapse  
she lived her life entirely through the nose  
and sense of touch. As the children watched her fade  
30 they saw their childhoods disappearing with her  
and by so much ceased a little to be children.

I who had shared, in my two-legged way,  
in what I could grasp of her doggy memories,  
knew we had lived through all the same affections,

*Continued*

- 35 felt the same losses, searched through an empty house  
for someone who would never be returning,  
brooded on sights and voices that had vanished.  
Perhaps she had a way of understanding  
our loss that she could never share with me,
- 40 but now our past belongs to me alone,  
now that she's gone and no one else remembers  
the weekends that we spent in the house together  
letting each other in and out of doors.

*Peter Davison*  
Contemporary American poet

**VII. Questions 52 to 64 in your Questions Booklet are based on this short story.**

**THE STORY-TELLER**

It was a hot afternoon, and the railway carriage was correspondingly sultry, and the next stop was at Templecombe, nearly an hour ahead. The occupants of the carriage were a small girl, and a smaller girl, and a small boy. An aunt belonging to the children occupied one corner seat, and the further corner seat on the opposite side was occupied by a bachelor who was a stranger to their party, but the small girls and the small boy emphatically occupied the compartment. Both the aunt and the children were conversational in a limited, persistent way, reminding one of the attentions of a house-fly that refused to be discouraged. Most of the aunt's remarks seemed to begin with "Don't," and nearly all of the children's remarks began with "Why?" The bachelor said nothing out loud.

10 "Don't, Cyril, don't," exclaimed the aunt, as the small boy began smacking the cushions of the seat, producing a cloud of dust at each blow.

"Come and look out of the window," she added.

15 The child moved reluctantly to the window. "Why are those sheep being driven out of that field?" he asked.

"I expect they are being driven to another field where there is more grass," said the aunt weakly. "But there is lots of grass in that field," protested the boy; "there's nothing else but grass there. Aunt, there's lots of grass in that field."

20 "Perhaps the grass in the other field is better," suggested the aunt fatuously.<sup>1</sup>

"Why is it better?" came the swift, inevitable question.

"Oh, look at those cows!" exclaimed the aunt. Nearly every field along the line had contained cows or bullocks, but she spoke as though she were drawing attention to a rarity.

"Why is the grass in the other field better?" persisted Cyril.

25 The frown on the bachelor's face was deepening to a scowl. He was a hard, unsympathetic man, the aunt decided in her mind. She was utterly unable to come to any satisfactory decision about the grass in the other field.

30 The smaller girl created a diversion by beginning to recite "On the Road to Mandalay." She only knew the first line, but she put her limited knowledge to the fullest possible use. She repeated the line over and over again in a dreamy but resolute and very audible voice; it seemed to the bachelor as though some one had had a bet with her that she could not repeat the line aloud two thousand times without stopping. Whoever it was who had made the wager was likely to lose his bet.

35 "Come over here and listen to a story," said the aunt, when the bachelor had looked twice at her and once at the communication cord.<sup>2</sup>

*Continued*

<sup>1</sup>fatuously—lamely; foolishly

<sup>2</sup>communication cord—a cord used to send coded messages to the train engineer regarding, for example, a need to stop the train

The children moved listlessly towards the aunt's end of the carriage. Evidently her reputation as a story-teller did not rank high in their estimation.

In a low, confidential voice, interrupted at frequent intervals by loud, petulant

40 questions from her listeners, she began an unenterprising and deplorably uninteresting story about a little girl who was good, and made friends with everyone on account of her goodness, and was finally saved from a mad bull by a number of rescuers who admired her moral character.

"Wouldn't they have saved her if she hadn't been good?" demanded the bigger  
45 of the small girls. It was exactly the question that the bachelor had wanted to ask.

"Well, yes," admitted the aunt lamely, "but I don't think they would have run quite so fast to her help if they had not liked her so much."

"It's the stupidest story I've ever heard," said the bigger of the small girls, with immense conviction.

50 "I didn't listen after the first bit, it was so stupid," said Cyril.

The smaller girl made no actual comment on the story, but she had long ago recommenced a murmured repetition of her favourite line.

"You don't seem to be a success as a story-teller," said the bachelor suddenly from his corner.

55 The aunt bristled in instant defence at this unexpected attack.

"It's a very difficult thing to tell stories that children can both understand and appreciate," she said stiffly.

"I don't agree with you," said the bachelor.

"Perhaps *you* would like to tell them a story," was the aunt's retort.

60 "Tell us a story," demanded the bigger of the small girls.

"Once upon a time," began the bachelor, "there was a little girl called Bertha, who was extraordinarily good."

The children's momentarily-aroused interest began at once to flicker; all stories seemed dreadfully alike, no matter who told them.

65 "She did all that she was told, she was always truthful, she kept her clothes clean, ate milk puddings as though they were jam tarts, learned her lessons perfectly, and was polite in her manners."

"Was she pretty?" asked the bigger of the small girls.

"Not as pretty as any of you," said the bachelor, "but she was horribly good."

70 There was a wave of reaction in favour of the story; the word horrible in connection with goodness was a novelty that commended itself. It seemed to introduce a ring of truth that was absent from the aunt's tales of infant life.

75 "She was so good," continued the bachelor, "that she won several medals for goodness, which she always wore, pinned on to her dress. There was a medal for obedience, another medal for punctuality, and a third for good behaviour. They were large metal medals and they clinked against one another as she walked. No other child in the town where she lived had as many as three medals, so everybody knew that she must be an extra good child."

"Horribly good," quoted Cyril.

80 "Everybody talked about her goodness, and the Prince of the country got to

*Continued*

hear about it, and he said that as she was so very good she might be allowed once a week to walk in his park, which was just outside the town. It was a beautiful park, and no children were ever allowed in it, so it was a great honour for Bertha to be allowed to go there."

85 "Were there any sheep in the park?" demanded Cyril.

"No," said the bachelor, "there were no sheep."

"Why weren't there any sheep?" came the inevitable question arising out of that answer.

90 The aunt permitted herself a smile, which might almost have been described as a grin.

"There were no sheep in the park," said the bachelor, "because the Prince's mother had once had a dream that her son would either be killed by a sheep or else by a clock falling on him. For that reason the Prince never kept a sheep in his park or a clock in his palace."

95 The aunt suppressed a gasp of admiration.

"Was the Prince killed by a sheep or by a clock?" asked Cyril.

"He is still alive, so we can't tell whether the dream will come true," said the bachelor unconcernedly; "anyway, there were no sheep in the park, but there were lots of little pigs running all over the place."

100 "What colour were they?"

"Black with white faces, white with black spots, black all over, grey with white patches, and some were white all over."

The story-teller paused to let a full idea of the park's treasures sink into the children's imaginations; then he resumed:

105 Bertha was rather sorry to find that there were no flowers in the park. She had promised her aunts, with tears in her eyes, that she would not pick any of the kind Prince's flowers, and she had meant to keep her promise, so of course it made her feel silly to find that there were no flowers to pick."

"Why weren't there any flowers?"

110 "Because the pigs had eaten them all," said the bachelor promptly. "The gardeners had told the Prince that you couldn't have pigs and flowers, so he decided to have pigs and no flowers."

There was a murmur of approval at the excellence of the Prince's decision; so many people would have decided the other way.

115 "There were lots of other delightful things in the park. There were ponds with gold and blue and green fish in them, and trees with beautiful parrots that said clever things at a moment's notice, and humming birds that hummed all the popular tunes of the day. Bertha walked up and down and enjoyed herself immensely, and thought to herself: 'If I were not so extraordinarily good I should not have been allowed to come into this beautiful park and enjoy all that there is to be seen in it,' and her three medals clinked against one another as she walked and helped to remind her how very good she really was. Just then an enormous wolf came prowling into the park to see if it could catch a fat little pig for its supper."

*Continued*

"What colour was it?" asked the children, amid an immediate quickening of

125 interest.

"Mud-colour all over, with a black tongue and pale grey eyes that gleamed with unspeakable ferocity. The first thing that it saw in the park was Bertha; her pinafore was so spotlessly white and clean that it could be seen from a great distance. Bertha saw the wolf and saw that it was stealing towards her, and she

130 began to wish that she had never been allowed to come into the park. She ran as hard as she could, and the wolf came after her with huge leaps and bounds. She managed to reach a shrubbery of myrtle bushes and she hid herself in one of the thickest of the bushes. The wolf came sniffing among the branches, its black tongue lolling out of its mouth and its pale grey eyes glaring with rage. Bertha was

135 terribly frightened, and thought to herself: 'If I had not been so extraordinarily good I should have been safe in the town at this moment.' However, the scent of the myrtle was so strong that the wolf could not sniff out where Bertha was hiding, and the bushes were so thick that he might have hunted about in them for a long time without catching sight of her, so he thought he might as well go off and catch

140 a little pig instead. Bertha was trembling very much at having the wolf prowling and sniffing so near her, and as she trembled the medal for obedience clinked against the medals for good conduct and punctuality. The wolf was just moving away when he heard the sound of the medals clinking and stopped to listen; they clinked again in a bush quite near him. He dashed into the bush, his pale grey eyes

145 gleaming with ferocity and triumph and dragged Bertha out and devoured her to the last morsel. All that was left of her were her shoes, bits of clothing, and the three medals for goodness."

"Were any of the little pigs killed?"

"No, they all escaped."

150 "The story began badly," said the smaller of the small girls, "but it had a beautiful ending."

"It is the most beautiful story that I ever heard," said the bigger of the small girls, with immense decision.

"It is the *only* beautiful story I have ever heard," said Cyril.

155 A dissentient opinion came from the aunt.

"A most improper story to tell to young children! You have undermined the effect of years of careful teaching."

"At any rate," said the bachelor, collecting his belongings preparatory to leaving the carriage, "I kept them quiet for ten minutes, which was more than you 160 were able to do."

"Unhappy woman!" he observed to himself as he walked down the platform of Templecombe station; "for the next six months or so those children will assail her in public with demands for an improper story!"

Saki  
British writer  
(1870–1916)

**VIII. Questions 65 to 70 in your Questions Booklet are based on this essay.**

### CROUSE ON CARS

*“Who has not owned,<sup>1</sup> with rapture-smitten frame, the power of grace, the magic of a name.”*—William Cowper<sup>2</sup>

The magic of a name. The car companies know all about it. Manufacturers name their cars the way you and I name our children, with much thought and care. The model name must be short and catchy—certainly no more than two syllables. More importantly, it has to evoke a certain image within the buying public, an

- 5 image that will capture the imagination, that will sell.

When the ill-conceived and infamous Edsel bit the dust in the late '50s, many people thought the name was to blame. What was an Edsel, anyway? The car was called, of course, after Henry Ford's son. It was not a good name, but one supposes it could have been worse: it could have been the Ralph or the George or

- 10 the Harvey.

Since the Edsel, the auto makers have been very careful about what they call cars. Prospective monikers are subject to massive and expensive consumer-testing campaigns. When Ford decided to market a European-style mini-car a few years ago, a total of 42 different names were considered before the company decided on

- 15 Escort, an appellation that makes no sense at all. Then again, most of them don't.

Conservative as they are, the car makers like to stick with certain tried-and-true themes. In recent years, animals have been very popular, especially after the sales success of the Mustang in the mid-'60s. Since then, we have seen other horses (the Pinto, the Colt and Bronco, to name three) and a whole flock of birds: Skyhawks,

- 20 Skylarks, Thunderbirds, Firebirds, Eagles and Falcons.

Surprisingly, only two North American cars have ever been named after fish. Can you name them? Sorry, time's up. They are the Plymouth Barracuda and the AMC Marlin. We can only wonder how long it will be before somebody comes up with the Ford Trout, the Chevy Perch or the Chrysler Carp.

- 25 When Chevrolet introduced the Biscayne and Bel Air in the '50s, it became stylish in Detroit to name cars after places. Soon there were Malibus, Monacos, Montegos, Monte Carlos, Rivieras and Capris, not to mention Sevilles, Cordobas and Eldorados. It sounds like a GM vice-president's holiday itinerary.

Interestingly, the New Yorker is the only car named after a big American city.

- 30 But that makes sense. After all, you wouldn't buy something called a Buffalo, would you? The Park Avenue is the only vehicle named for a street. It sounds expensive and it is. And for what it's worth, the Aspen is the only model named for a ski resort. So there.

For a while, space-age names were in vogue: the Nova, the Satellite, the Astre,

*Continued*

<sup>1</sup>owned—acknowledged

<sup>2</sup>William Cowper—British poet (1731–1800)

35 the Vega and the Galaxie, a name conceived by someone who couldn't spell. In all cases, the only thing space-age about these cars was the name. But they sure sounded modern.

Lately the trend has been toward simple names with a high-tech sound like Omni, Futura, Sentra and Omega. Then there are the Reliant, Civic and Accord,  
40 names with an aura of solid dependability—or at least that's what the advertising copy writers seem to believe.

Sometimes a particular company or division will fall in love with certain nomenclature and just use it to death. Pontiac, for instance, has a thing about the word "Grand" and variations thereof. To date, there have been the Grand Prix, the  
45 Grand Am, the Grande Parisienne and the Gran LeMans, not to mention the Gran Turismo Omligatta, which was shortened to GTO. In any case, it's all very . . . uh, grand.

Station wagons have to have very specialized titles. A wagon should conjure up images of kids and white picket fences and petunia-planting suburban bliss.  
50 Hence names like Colony Park, Estate, Suburban, Country Squire et al. The fancier the handle, the more the wagon is plastered with plastic wood trim.

Some car names are just plain strange. Do you know what a Caprice is? According to the dictionary, it's "a sudden impulse of the mind; a whim; a freak." Monza, which sounds like an Italian swear word, doesn't mean a thing, at least  
55 according to the dictionary. And can anybody tell me what a Toronado is? Or a Volare, Celica or Camaro? They're just sounds.

Of all the car names now being used, only one has any actual historical significance: the Ford Fairlane—after the original Henry Ford's Michigan estate. For the most part, the terms are just dumb. Is a Valiant really brave? Does an  
60 Arrow really fly? And what about the Gremlin, which according to Webster's is "a mischievous invisible being"?

If the names aren't confusing enough for you, consider the proliferation in recent years of letters and numbers. This is a European phenomenon now spreading to the North American makes. You can now buy a 6000LE, LTD, XR7,  
65 CRX, GLC, RX7, Z28, 350SL or 300ZX. In the main, these designations have no meaning whatsoever. I once owned a model called an LE. The salesman told me it stood for "limited edition," which struck me as funny seeing as how they would sell one to anyone who had the down payment. How limited is that?

When you think about it, maybe Edsel wasn't a dumb name after all. At least it  
70 had a bit of character. To tell you the honest truth, I don't know many people who actually address their cars by their factory names anyway.

In fact, I'll let you in on a little secret: I call mine Bruce.

*Wayne Crouse*  
Contemporary Canadian writer

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